

5 We claim:

1. A network appliance for communicating information comprising:  
means for inputting information by a user;  
memory means for electronically storing the information; and  
processor means for communicating the information to and from a  
10 network, said information comprising digital representations of user preferences,  
and interactions between the user and a vehicle.
2. The network appliance of claim 1, wherein said information further comprises at  
least one of interactions between the vehicle and an in-vehicle computer,  
15 physical location of the user and the vehicle, physical destination of the user and  
the vehicle, physical location of a business, and business to consumer messages.
3. The appliance of claim 2, wherein said interactions between the vehicle and the  
in-vehicle computer further comprise at least one of monitoring fuel level,  
20 monitoring oil level, monitoring engine temperature, monitoring brake function  
and condition, monitoring gas cap placement, monitoring vehicle door status,  
monitoring transmission status, monitoring vehicle speed, monitoring engine  
speed, monitoring battery charge, monitoring body integrity, and monitoring  
physical proximity.
- 25 4. The network appliance of claim 1, wherein said network further comprises the  
Internet.
5. The network appliance of claim 1, wherein said network appliance is installed in  
the vehicle.

5 6. The network appliance of claim 1, wherein said vehicle further comprises at least one of an automobile, a boat, and a motorcycle.

7. The network appliance of claim 1, wherein said interactions between the user and the vehicle further comprise at least one of depressing an acceleration pedal, depressing a braking pedal, depressing a clutch pedal, turning a steering wheel, turning on headlights, turning on windshield wipers, turning on in-vehicle climate controls, turning on an engine, turning off the engine, releasing the acceleration pedal, and releasing the braking pedal.

10 8. The network appliance of claim 1, wherein said means for inputting information by a user further comprises means for inputting information via speech.

15 9. A method for communicating information between a vehicle and a system of networked computers, comprising the steps of:  
requesting information from the system of networked computers;  
determining operational conditions of the vehicle;  
determining if the operational conditions are safe to process the request;

20 and  
if it is safe to process the request, sending the information request to the system of networked computers.

10. The method of claim 9, further comprising the steps of:  
25 checking if there is a manual override by a user;  
if there is a manual override, sending the information request to the system of networked computers; and  
if there is no manual override, notifying the user of the delay and eventually resuming processing of the information request.

5

11. The method of claim 9, further comprising the steps of:
  - 10 checking whether a user clarification is required;
  - if no clarification is required, receiving information from the system of networked computers; and
  - if clarification is required, resending the information request to the system of networked computers.
12. The method of Claim 9, further comprising the steps of:
  - 15 receiving information from the system of networked computers;
  - caching the information received;
  - 10 checking operational conditions of the vehicle;
  - 20 checking if the operational conditions are safe to process the received information; and
  - if it is safe to process the received information, delivering the received information to the user.
- 25 13. The method of claim 12, further comprising the steps of:
  - 20 checking if there is a manual override by the user;
  - if there is no manual override, notifying the user of the delay and eventually resuming processing of the received information; and
  - if there is a manual override, delivering the received information to the user.
- 30 14. The method of claim 9, wherein said step of requesting information from the system of networked computers further comprises requesting at least one of location-based, time-based, and vehicle diagnostic information.

5 15. The method of claim 9, wherein said system of networked computers further  
comprises the Internet.

16. A network appliance comprising:  
an input device to input information;  
a processing unit capable of connecting to a system of networked computers;  
10 a first computer instruction that directs said processing unit to receive a request  
for access to information from the system of networked computers;  
a second computer instruction that determines operational conditions of the  
vehicle;  
a third computer instruction that determines if the operational conditions are safe  
15 to process the request; and  
a fourth computer instruction that sends the information request to the system of  
networked computers if it is safe to process the request.

17. The network appliance of claim 16, wherein the system of networked computers  
20 further comprises the Internet.

18. The network appliance of claim 16, wherein the input device further comprises a  
keyboard.

25 19. The network appliance of claim 16, further comprising  
a fifth computer instruction that checks if there is a manual override by a user;  
and  
a sixth computer instruction that sends the information request to the system of  
networked computers if there is a manual override.

30 20. The network appliance of claim 16, further comprising

5                   a fifth computer instruction that directs said processing unit to receive information from the system of networked computers;

                  a sixth computer instruction that caches the information received;

                  a seventh computer instruction that checks operational conditions of the vehicle;

10                  an eighth computer instruction that checks if the operational conditions are safe to process the received information; and

                  a ninth computer instruction that delivers the received information to the user if it is safe to process the received information.